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CURRENT LITERATURE

BOOK REVIEWS

A practical plant biochemistry

MRS. ONSLOW[1] has just written an interesting descriptive text and laboratory manual on plant biochemistry. The author is already well known as an investigator of anthocyanins, and also as the author of "The anthocyanin pigments of plants," under the name of MURIEL WHELDALE.

The aim of the book is stated as follows: "This book is intended primarily for students of botany. Such students' knowledge of plant products is usually obtained, on the one hand from organic chemistry, and on the other hand from plant physiology. Between these two standpoints there is a gap, which, it is hoped, the following pages may help to fill. It is essentially a textbook for practical work, on an aspect of plant biochemistry which has received up to the present time very little consideration in teaching. A number of experiments have been devised and have been actually tested in practical classes. These experiments should enable a student to extract from the plant itself the chemical compounds of which it is constituted, and to learn something of their properties."

The book consists of the following chapters: Introduction (9 pp.); The colloidal state (7 pp.); Enzyme action (9 pp.); Carbon assimilation (15 pp.); Carbohydrates and their hydrolizing enzymes (38 pp.); Fats and lipases (8 pp.); Aromatic compounds and oxidizing enzymes (31 pp.); Proteins and proteases (24 pp.); Glucosides and glucoside-splitting enzymes (12 pp.); and Plant bases (12 pp.).

The reviewer believes the author has done plant science a great service in preparing the book. It should be welcomed by all workers in the field.—WM. CROCKER.

New Zealand plants

A country possessing a vegetation of more than usual luxuriance and variety is indeed to be congratulated when it is fortunate enough to have its forests and grasslands described by a botanist who combines a thorough scientific knowledge with the rare ability of presenting scientific facts in language at once accurate and intelligible to the citizen with no scientific training. COCKAYNE[2] seems to have accomplished this difficult task in a volume which

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[1] ONSLOW, MURIEL WHELDALE, Practical plant biochemistry. 8vo. pp. 178. Cambridge: University Press. 1920.

[2] COCKAYNE, L., New Zealand plants and their story. 8vo. xv+248. *figs. 113.* 1919. 2d ed. Wellington: M. F. Marks, Government Printer.